

August 3, 2006

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF HIGHWAY DESIGN**

CONFERENCE REPORT

PROJECT: HINSDALE
14540N
(NH Route 63 reconstruction of areas damaged by the flood of
October 2005)

DATE OF CONFERENCE: July 6, 2006

LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: Hinsdale Community Center

ATTENDED BY: TOWN OF HINSDALE Others attending
Town Administrator Jill Collins (See attached list)

ELECTED STATE OFFICIALS
Senator T. Eaton

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
E. Smith R. Landry J. Marshall D. Graham
J. Evans K. Mudgett M. Fudala

SUBJECT: Combined Town Officials / Public Informational Meeting

R. Landry gave a brief history and overview of the project. The floods in October 2005 washed out a portion of NH Route 63 approximately 1500 ft from the intersection of NH Route 119 requiring that the affected area be restricted to alternating one-way traffic controlled by temporary traffic signals. The proposed design reflects comments made during the scoping meeting with the Town Officials held January 30, 2006.

Jim Marshall went on to describe the project in detail including the design controls that were used. Several alternative roadway alignments were evaluated by the NHDOT Highway Designers and Geotechnical staff. Steep slopes in certain areas on both sides of NH 63 and the bedrock that exists require that the work include some form of slope stabilization. In front of the Smith property, a 175 feet long retaining wall is proposed along with a rock lined slope 275 foot long just north of the wall. The preferred alignment in this area requires that the Smith property be purchased and the house and garage be removed. Previous to this meeting, alternative alignments were discussed with Mr. and Mrs. Smith to limit impacts to their property. After reviewing these impacts, Mr. Smith requested complete acquisition of their property. The NHDOT is in the process of arranging for an appraisal and anticipating that a settlement can be reached. In addition to the Smith property acquisition, there will also be strip takings, slope easements and drainage easements at seven (7) other locations.

The project will also impact utilities in the area including a water line that will need to be relocated; a sewer line that will be terminated prior to the Smith property; and, utility poles to be relocated.

At the initial scoping meeting, some that attended expressed concern over the sharpness of the curve by the Domingue property. It was indicated that southbound vehicles often drive too fast and cross centerline, ending up driving on the wrong side of the road because the curve was too sharp for the speed they are traveling. The horizontal curve is good for the posted speed of 30 mph, but sight distance on the inside of the curve is very limited, restricted by a cut slope. The proposed design cuts back this slope to obtain the required sight distance for 30 mph.

Two other areas just north of the washout on NH 63 will have remedial work done as part of this project due to flood damage. Approximately 1400 feet north of the washout, there is a culvert that eroded during the flood and debris was trapped just past the outlet that clogged the stream. The intent is to remove the debris, place new concrete wing walls to replace the eroded wing walls, place stone to reinforce the area, and rehabilitate the pavement that was also damaged from the erosion. The other area is a sloughed slope, 1300 feet north of the culvert. Stone fill will be placed to stabilize the area.

During construction, traffic will be maintained alternating one-way for most of the work; however, it may be necessary to close the road to construct the retaining wall and route traffic temporarily to Old Chesterfield Road.

There is an accident history at the intersection of NH 63 and Old Chesterfield Road. At the last meeting, several comments were made regarding its poor geometry and steep grade down to NH 63. The Department agreed to look into a conceptual design for improvements with the understanding that funding for the improvements is not available at this time. (Any improvements would need to be requested by the Town Officials through the Regional Planning Commission as part of the Ten Year Plan process.) The conceptual design is to relocate the intersection 1300 feet north of its current location with turns accommodating a single unit truck. The topography throughout this area is very steep, resulting in two grades approaching 12%. This seems to be the best compromise design that otherwise would involve substantial property impacts.

Jon Evans read a prepared Environmental Statement describing the identification process of historic properties and said that if anyone would like to be a consulting party with the process that they should contact Harry Kinter at Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in Concord.

The meeting was then opened to questions and comments:

- *We were hoping the improvements to the intersection of Old Chesterfield Road and Route 63 could be designed at its current location instead of relocating the intersection. Also, the design includes approximately a 12% grade on Old Chesterfield Road - the maximum grade that most Planning Boards allow is 10% for emergency response vehicles.*

R. Landry responded that several attempts were made to re-design the existing intersection; however, turning movements couldn't be made to work well due to both horizontal and vertical controls.

- *The north end of Old Chesterfield Road was damaged during the time it was used to detour traffic while Route 63 was closed for the work that was done. Will the Town be compensated for the repairs to repave the road?*

R. Landry said that he would discuss this issue with Jamie Sikora of FHWA to review what could be funded under the FHWA-Emergency Relief Program.

- *I was originally against keeping the sharp curve at Domingue's property, but it may be better to keep the sharp curve (to slow traffic down) if sight distance could be improved by cutting back the slope. There have been some accidents on that curve involving cars that were speeding.*

R. Landry stated that the horizontal curve in this location tends to slow traffic in advance of the downhill grade leading into Town, something that's desirable to keep in place. Flattening the curve would probably result in higher speeds approaching the intersection of Route 119 and the downtown area. The existing stopping sight distance for this curve is 135 feet. The proposed improvements would improve it to 200 feet.

- *Since it will be another 9 months or so until work begins, is there any way you can slow traffic down in the area (of the alternating one-way and the temporary signals) and enforce the area better? I have been passed while waiting for the light to change. I have also heard several people say that they will not stop for this light.*

R. Landry said that we heard the complaint of the long cycle and that you can see when there are no cars approaching from the other end. Doug Graham from District 4 explained why the signals operate as they do. He will discuss possible improvements with someone from the Bureau of Traffic and consult with the Chesterfield Police and the Road Agent for their input.

- *If you've decided to take the property where the garage is that prevents two-way traffic from being restored, can't the property be purchased and the garage removed so the road can be temporarily*

widened and the signals taken out, before the rest of the project starts?

R. Landry responded that we considered this but, unfortunately, it takes a long time to go through the process of appraising, negotiating and actually purchasing property. If it's at all possible to speed up the process in this case to the point where we own the property early enough, we will see if the changes can be made so the signals could be removed and two-way traffic restored.

Submitted by:

Kirk Mudgett, P.E.
Final Design

Noted by JAM/LRL/MJF

cc: J. Moore	D. Graham	W. Hauser
E. Smith	M. Fudala	Kevin Prince
R. Landry	J. Marshall	John D. Smith, Chairman of Hinsdale Selectmen